

ETERNAL LIFE! NO. 2396

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, JANUARY 20, 1895,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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"This is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."
John 17:3.

*"We are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God,
and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols."*
1 John 5:20, 21.

OUR subject this morning [Sermon #1946, Volume 33—*Eternal Life within Present Grasp*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] was concerning laying hold on eternal life, and I thought that I would say a little more, tonight, about eternal life. Many people, when they hear or read that expression, suppose that it means heaven. It does mean that, but it means much more. Eternal life commences *here*—it begins in the believer as soon as he is born-again. Then he receives into him that same life which he will have throughout eternity! Eternal life is not a thing of changes. The river widens and deepens, as I showed you this morning, but it is always the same river of the water of life; it always flows from the same source—it is always constituted in the ; it simply rids us of certain impediments that hamper our true life in its upward flow. The life of the Christian, here, is the triumphant life that is to be enjoyed hereafter! It is one and the same life so far as its real nature is concerned.

It was the great end of the life, death and work of Christ to give this eternal life to all believers. He came into the world on purpose, that they should forever live through Him. He has not accomplished His design in you, my hearer, unless He has made you live unto God. There is a Savior—that you know—but He is *not* your Savior unless He has infused into you a life infinitely superior to that which was born in you at the first. “You must be born-again.” And by that new birth you must receive a higher and more divine life than that which throbs in your bosom by nature. Judge for yourself whether Christ has come into the world to any purpose that affects you and especially judge whether you have received eternal life at His hands. Remember how it is written, “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” The ever-living God is not the Father of dead souls, but He is the Father of those whom He has *quickened*; and the power to become sons of God lies, in a great measure, in the life which is divinely imparted to all who receive Christ and believe on His name.

It is in the power of Christ to give this eternal life. In the verse preceding our first text, the Lord Jesus, addressing His Father, says of Himself, “You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.” The Father has life in Himself and He quickens all who live; and even so, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, has life in Himself; and this life He imparts to all who believe in Him. It is in His power to bestow that life upon every soul that trusts Him and He delights in exercising His divine prerogative.

Our Lord Jesus bestows this eternal life only upon His elect. Speaking to His Father, in the verse I quoted just now, He says of Himself, “You have given Him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.” God has an elect people. So long as the Bible endures, there is no way of getting that doctrine out of it unless men willfully pervert its plainest teaching. From before the foundation of the world the Lord chose a people unto Himself, according to the sovereign purpose of His own will, even as He says, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” These people whom God has chosen are made known by their being quickened, in due time, into a higher and superior life than that of the flesh. Till then they are like the rest of mankind; dead as the dry bones of Ezekiel’s Valley of Vision; but the divine breath of the Eternal Spirit blows upon them and they are made to live and stand upon their feet, an

exceedingly great army! By this test can all of you know whether you are the subjects upon whom God's grace has worked. Is there a new life within your soul? Have you been raised from death unto life? Have you been made to feel new emotions, new desires, new longings, new pains and new joys? For, if you have, then are you the people of God! But if not, I pray that in you, also, divine grace may yet be thus magnified.

The question for us now to consider is in what does this eternal life consist? I do not propose to answer the question as it might be answered, in various ways, but only according to the first of our two texts: "This is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."

I. First, then, ETERNAL LIFE CONSISTS IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE ONLY TRUE GOD.

Let us think for a little while upon the lack of this knowledge. The loss of this knowledge followed upon the Fall. As long as man knew his God, trusted his God and obeyed his God, he was happy enough. But man must know the fallen spirit and, once making acquaintance with him, man must know the knowledge of good and evil. And, contrary to the Lord's command, he must take of the forbidden fruit and eat. So he lost the knowledge of God and, with that loss, he lost everything! The highest privilege of manhood is to be acquainted with God; and when our first father turned his back upon God and began to unlearn whatever he had known of his Creator and to forget all that had been revealed concerning his Lord, then came the Fall; and it was a fall, indeed!

Out of this lack of knowledge of God grew all manner of idolatries. Man must have a God; he cannot be happy without one. There are some who struggle hard before they yield, but, as surely as a dog must have a master, so surely man must have a God! There is a great superior Being, our Creator, Preserver and Judge, whom we must have as our Redeemer, or else we are utterly undone. Without God, our nature is disabled and divided; its best part has run away—it becomes dead, in fact, when it becomes separated from God. It was the lack of knowledge of the only true God that led men to bow down before blocks of wood and stone, to worship the sun, moon and stars—and to set up all manner of visible objects and to say of them—"These are our gods." Oh, to what terrible mischief, to what mental and spiritual death, the lack of the knowledge of God has led the sons of men!

Nor is this all that the lack of the knowledge of the true God has produced in us. It has spoiled the best aspirations of the noblest men such as Plato and Socrates. Blindly feeling after God, yet without truly knowing Him, what could they do? They could rise to no great height; they could accomplish but little. Men such as they reared an altar and inscribed thereon, "To the unknown god." But what kind of prayer is that which is offered to a god whom we do not know? What comfort can come out of an unknown god? What peace, what rest, and what joy can come from a being after whom we grope in the dark, but whom we do not know? Not to know the only true God is death—death even to the noblest spirits among us! But it is a much more terrible death to those who, knowing nothing of God, seek that which will please self, indulge their vile lusts and follow their unbridled passions! What is all that, indeed, but the result of the fact that, not knowing God, they are seeking to submit themselves to some other lord? Man must have a master! He is like a horse that must have a rider! He is so constituted that unless he yields himself to a power superior to himself, he grovels and sinks down yet more and more until his condition is little better than that of the beasts that perish! Indeed, in some respects, he is worse off than they are.

I can scarcely picture what manhood would have been if we had never fallen. The chief joy, I think, would have been that each one among us would have had the only true God as ours. We should have been born into the world, whatever our circumstances, under the patronage of God! We would have gone forth to our labor, sweetly singing in the companionship of God. We would have retired to our rest at night—supposing that things had been as they are now—and we would have fallen asleep as in the embraces of our God, or on our Father's breast. Days would have had a brightness about them superior to any the sun can yield, and nights would have had nothing for us to dread even in their densest darkness, for the Lord would still have been there! As a child is happy and knows no care nor need while a good father provides for him everything he needs, such would man have been. Oh, men are miserable who have not known their God! Unhappy men! Well may Scripture speak of them as dead, for it is death to be without the knowledge of God!

But, brothers and sisters, what is this knowledge of God which is eternal life? Let us talk a little about *the meaning of this knowledge*. It is *not* eternal life to know that there *is* a God! A great many people know as much as that and still remain dead. Those who know not that there is a God are dead in the dark, but those who know that there is a God and yet do not trust Him, are dead in the light! That condition is, perhaps, the worse of the two. At any rate, it involves a greater responsibility. Yet, to know

that there is a God is not the same thing as *knowing* God. I may know that there is a Queen of England, but I may not know her. I know that there are many persons in the world whom I do not know and it is a sad thing for anyone to know that there is a God and yet not truly to know God.

To explain what is meant by knowing God, I must say, first, that it is to know Him as God, that is to say, to know Him as God to us. I have already told you that everybody has something that is god to him; something that is superior to himself, and which rules him; something to which he looks up to and which he worships. Now, the great invisible Jehovah, the one God that made heaven and earth, in whose hands our breath is, who has revealed Himself in the Trinity of His divine persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—the God of the whole earth, must be God to us! That means that we reverence Him, that we bow before Him as worshippers, that we submit ourselves to His law, that we seek to do His pleasure. No man really knows God who does not know Him as God, and does not accept Him as His God—and to accept God as your God is eternal life! This is how eternal life becomes yours! And if you have come to that point, you have eternal life.

Still, that statement does not fully explain what it is to know God. It is to be on terms of personal acquaintance with Him. The Lord is not to be seen, neither can His footsteps be heard, but to know God is to be conscious of His presence by an inward sense which does both see and hear. It is to feel that He is everywhere—on the land or on the sea and, knowing that He is there, to rejoice in being with Him! In fact, it is to find great delight in this God who is not far from any of us. It is to be (let me put it very plainly) *on speaking terms with Him!* It is to be so reconciled to Him that you have no dread of Him, no bondage and fear when you think of Him.

You then regard God as your best friend whom you love and, in whom you delight, to whom you talk as naturally as you talk to friend or father, into whose bosom you pour your griefs, into whose heart you tell your joys. God is nearer than your most familiar friend, nearer to you than eyes and ears, nearer to you than your own body, for He gets within your soul, which your body can never do! If you really know, experimentally, what I am talking about, you have eternal life. If this is so, that you know the only true God, distinctly recognizing His presence, speaking with Him and rejoicing in Him and, if, above all, you are striving to be like He—if His Spirit in you is photographing the image of God upon your nature so that the old image, which He gave to Adam, but which was effaced by sin, is being reproduced in you by the Holy Spirit; then you know the only true God and this, dear friends, is eternal life!

Now, having shown you what the lack of this knowledge produces and the meaning of this knowledge, let me briefly speak of *the connection between the knowledge of God and eternal life.*

A man without God is a living man, of course, for he works, he eats, and he drinks. Yes, but he has missed the only true life. He has missed a secret happiness which is the very *essence* of life and, without which life is really death. You do not know it, dear hearer, if you have never believed in Christ! And I do not expect you to believe what I say, but let me tell you that there is a something that makes life worth living when you once come to know God. There is a secret bliss—I cannot call it anything less than bliss! There is a little heaven, a compendious, compressed, essential heaven which God drops into that soul that lives with Him, so that we know that which makes us leap for joy and makes us bless God that we were ever created! If I had no God, I could say, “Cursed was the day in which it was said to my mother that a man-child was born into the world.” But now I thank God for my existence! Sometimes, when in great pain and anguish, yet having God with me, I have felt inclined not to curse the day of my birth, but to rejoice that I was ever born, even if I had to live a life of perpetual pain, seeing that I have a God who is, indeed, my own!

To have a God also means that you have a grand objective in life. Look at many of you, how you work hard from morning to night just to provide enough to keep body and soul together. If you have not a God, you are wretched creatures, indeed! But the slave who tugs at the oar of the galley and receives no pay but the cruel lash, is a happy and blessed man if God is with him! Many and many a Huguenot prisoner, condemned for life to the galleys because of his faith, has been happier than the king upon his throne who thrust him there! With God, all conditions of life become life that is life, indeed—but without Him, there is nothing to live for! Here is a poor fellow who lives till he has accumulated millions—it must be all the harder to die and leave so much, must it not? What is the good of it? To get a paragraph in the Illustrated London News saying that So-and-So died worth so much? Oh, the misery of having existed for so small a result! But when you have God, you have something to live for, something that makes every little thing sublime and turns the most common actions of daily life into a holy exercise of a royal priesthood unto the Most High!

The man who has God also has the explanation of a great many things which puzzle other people and he has something better, still, for he has his God to fall back upon when he cannot explain anything.

I like, sometimes, to have to pull up against a huge granite rock and feel, "I never shall see through that rock and I shall never see my way through that difficulty." Well, I do not need to see my way through it! I do not need a tunnel from here to New Zealand; do you? I know that I cannot go through the very heart of the earth and I have no wish to do so. I am very glad to know that I cannot, by a stamp of my foot, force my way through to the other side of the globe; it would be a poor globe if I could! I would not worship a god that I could fully understand. I do not know how I would feel devout over a faith which I perfectly comprehended. If I could put my religion into my pocket, like a box of lozenges, I should soon suck it all away, but I like something that is grander than my loftiest thought, more sublime than my noblest conceptions, and which tops me altogether! And I find it a blessed thing in life, when troubled with all these difficult problems of our teeming population and ever-present distress, to fall back upon this fact—"There is a God who will overrule it all and, from the seeming evil, will produce a good; and from that good something better, to His own praise and glory!"

A man with God—you may strip him, but he is clothed in the light of God. A man with God—you may shut him up in prison, but he is perfectly at liberty, for his spirit soars into the immensities! A man with God; he may be afflicted with a hundred diseases at once, but he has the best of all health, even the sanity of his soul! A man with God has a window to his room—a man without God goes round, and round, and round, and looks, but does not see anything at all! Sometimes he thinks, "I wish that I could see something, but there is nothing to be seen." To those who are without God, the future is all a blank; they call themselves "agnostics"—that is, men who do not know anything. But you who have God look for eternal life in His presence. If men talk to you of joy, you say, "Oh, yes, there must be joy to one who is at peace with God. It cannot be that any man who loves God and is reconciled to Him, should be perpetually unhappy!" That cannot be, so that, in knowing God, there springs up in the man's heart a hope, no, an *assurance* that it must be well with his soul and that, though heaven and earth should pass away, God's Word can never pass away, and therefore, the safety of the man who clings to that Word must be secure! Yes, to know the only true God is to get where life is life, to get into eternal life—not mere existence, but into that which is worthy to be called life, indeed!

II. Now, dear brothers and sisters, in the second place, notice that ETERNAL LIFE ALSO CONSISTS IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST, WHOM GOD HAS SENT—"This is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."

Our second text shows that the first one by no means implies that Jesus Christ is not God, for it expressly declares, concerning Jesus Christ, "This is the true God, and eternal life." This is the teaching of both passages. *It would not be eternal life to know God apart from Christ.* God the Father, apart from Jesus Christ, is just an Almighty Being infinitely just, whose laws I have violated; a Being infinitely loving, who would bless me, but who cannot do so while I violate His laws; a God full of tremendous power and unerring wisdom who would exercise all these for me but that I, having broken His law, the penalties of that law are inevitable, and cannot be reversed! It was wise and just on God's part to append a penalty to sin; nothing could be crueler than to allow men to sin without being punished for it! It would be abhorrent to a God of Love as much as to a God of Justice if sin could be made a trifle and there were no punishment attached to it. The first knowledge you and I ever get of God, when we come to know Him, is as one who is infinitely loving, but who, nevertheless, no, who, *for that very reason*, is infinitely Just and *must punish sin*.

No one knows the true God in the real sense of knowledge except through Jesus Christ, for no man comes unto the Father but by the Son. But even if he could know God, in a measure, apart from the revelation of Him in Christ Jesus, it would be a knowledge of terror that would make him flee away and avoid God! It would not be life to our souls to know God apart from His Son, Jesus Christ! We must know the Christ whom He has sent or our knowledge does not bring eternal life to us. But, beloved, when we see God in Christ meeting us, demanding a penalty and yet providing it, Himself, decreeing the punishment most justly and then bearing it *Himself*. When we see Him to be both judge and expiation, both ruler and sacrifice, then we see that "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Then it is, in the knowledge of God *in Christ* and God *through Christ*, that we find that we have entered into eternal life!

Let me add, here, that it would not be eternal life to know Jesus Christ *if He were not God*—if, as some say, He was only a good man—that He was only a good man is impossible, for He was the worst of impostors if He was not God, for He spoke of Himself as God! And if He were not divine, then He imposed on men. If He were nothing but a mere man, how could He give us eternal life? And of what use were trust in Him? But if He who bled on Calvary was very God of very God, as well as man, then the sacrifice He offered has an infinite value about it and I, even I, dare trust my soul to Him with the

full assurance that there must be, in such a Savior, ability to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him!

How do we come to know Christ? I do not think it necessary, at this time, to explain much about how we know Christ, because I am addressing thousands of persons who do know Him. Brothers and sisters, you know Christ *in the glory of His divine person*, God and man. You have no doubts about either His deity or His humanity; you have tasted of the sympathy that comes to you through His Manhood, and you have felt the majesty of His Godhead; He is to you your brother and yet your God! You know Him, then, in the glory of His person.

You also know Him *in the peace-speaking power of His precious blood*. This is, to me, the best evidence of the truth of our holy religion. I was once troubled and tossed to and fro, driven almost to despair under a sense of sin—it was only when I understood Christ's *substitutionary* sacrifice and realized that He stood in my place and bore my sin in His own body on the cross that I obtained peace with God! I know the power of His blood by the peace it brought me! Do not many of you know it also? I am sure that many of you do. Whenever sin returns to assail you and you get troubled and perplexed, do you not go and look, again, to Christ upon the cross, and all your anxiety disappears? The wounds of Jesus bleed a balsam that heals your wounds! And His death yields the life that delivers you from going down to death!

We also know Christ *in the perfection of His righteousness*. By faith we have put on that glorious robe and we have gone in unto God with our brother's garments on; and the Lord has accepted us for His sake; and we have come from the divine presence exceedingly comforted and blessed, "accepted in the Beloved." We know, dear friends, now, what communion with God means. I have never seen Him, but I know Him better than anybody I ever saw! I have never heard His voice, nor do I expect to hear it till these ears are deaf in the grave, unless the Lord should first come suddenly, but I know His voice better than I know the voice of anyone on earth! I can discern it in a moment. A stranger will I not follow, for I know not the voice of strangers, but if there is any truth of God uttered, I know that truth by a kind of instinct within my soul. The charm of it is that Jesus has spoken it and it commands my immediate loyal acceptance. Question anything Christ has said? Brethren, if I find Christ contradicting everything that I ever *thought of*, or any decision I had *arrived at*, I would, without regret, fling every thought in my mind to the winds—and I would embrace each syllable that He has spoken with a joy most intense and a loyalty that never questions!

I have heard of "life in London." I do not know much about what that expression means, but I know what life in Christ is, and there is nothing like it! *Life in heaven is only life in Christ*—if He were gone from the realms of bliss, there would be no life in heaven, itself—the center, the core, the soul of the everlasting joy of the redeemed lies in the fact of Christ being with them and their knowing Him! This is life eternal, to know Jesus Christ whom God has sent, and to know God in Him.

This will give you life, you daughters of despair who are at death's dark door: know God and Christ and you shall live! This will give you life, you disappointed ones, to whom life seems to be like a sucked orange which you would gladly throw away! This will be the cup of life, again, and put into it the nectar of true life. This will give you something to trust in! This will give you rest to your spirit, this will give you power for service, this will give you a holy expectancy for the world to come! In fact, everything that life means comes to the man who knows God and knows Christ: and everything that death means comes to the man who does *not* know God, and does *not* know Christ; he is dead even while he continues to exist.

I have finished all my discourse but for one fragment. Did you notice the last clause in our second text? "This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Do you see the drift of the apostle's injunction? You live by the true God, you live by Jesus Christ—therefore, keep yourselves from idols. Idols are untrue gods and they are death to you. Therefore, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

Of course, I need not say to you that we must carefully preserve our integrity in the matter of worshipping anything that *can be seen*. No child of God may dare to worship a picture, an image, or anything that is visible! I would like to break out of every church window every image of the saints, lest it should be worshipped; and especially to banish from all public observation every symbol and sign that ever has been worshipped in the Church of Rome lest they should be worshipped again! I see, in the symbolism of certain churches, a tendency to set up something visible as an object of worship. Remember the commandment, "You shall have no other gods before Me," that is, have *nothing* to worship but God, and then, next, "You shall not make unto you any engraved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not

bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep My commandments." The worship of the cross, the crucifix, the "consecrated" bread, or anything of that kind is sheer idolatry, and it always brings death with it! Gospel light dies out when anything but the true God is worshipped. Therefore, away with idols! Have a holy iconoclastic zeal against anything that is regarded by men with the reverence which is due to God, alone!

But keep yourselves from all other idols; from the idols of your own brain, from creeds of your own making, from thoughts of your own imagining. Keep yourselves from letting anything but God rule you. Keep yourselves from golden idols; keep yourselves from the love of fame; keep yourselves from the adoration of human science! "Keep yourselves from idols." There is no God but God and Christ Jesus, His Son, is the only Mediator between God and men. Keep yourselves from allowing anything but God to get the upper hand of you. Make not gods of yourselves, your own persons; make not gods of your families, make not gods of your children. Verily, I say unto you, there are many who worship their children, and set them up as little gods! And when they are taken away from them, as they will be when they worship them, then they cry out against God most bitterly. How could they think that God would allow the little Dagon's to be set up in His place? It must be God first, God last, God midst, and God without end! May He make it so with us that, from now on, we shall have this eternal life which consists in knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 27.

Verse 1. *The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*

If all your light comes from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, you need not be afraid of losing your light! "The Lord is my light and my salvation." If your salvation comes from the God of salvation, if it is worked out by the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, you need not be afraid that you will ever be robbed of that salvation; and you may confidently sing, "Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

1. *The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

"He puts His own force into me and if He who is omnipotent is the strength of my life, who can stand against me? If my strength were in myself, I might well be afraid, but if it is in God, alone, if, 'the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?'" Dismiss your fears, then, whatever may be the cause of them, all you who are trusting in the Lord Jehovah! The causes of fear are many, but the cure of fear is one, namely, faith in the living God!

2. *When the wicked, even my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*

This is the record of the psalmist's past experience. David was a soldier and he had a soldier's dangers and a soldier's deliverances. And here he writes the history of his battles. These are dispatches from the field. When the psalmist's enemies rushed upon him like hungry lions seeking to eat him up, they stumbled and fell! He had not to fight, or even to sound a trumpet, for the Lord fought for him!

3. *Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.*

The past gives him confidence both for the present and for the future. Happy is the man who can fall back upon his past experience, not to make of it a bed to lie upon, but to make of it a lever with which to lift his soul out of the Slough of Despond! I think I have sometimes said that we may use our past experiences as the bargemen use their oars when they push backward to drive the boat forward. You must never lie down upon past mercies and say, "I am satisfied with all that has happened," but use the past to help you in the present and the future.

4. *One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.*

David wanted to spend his days in the house of his God and we, also, may do the same, not only in the place that is used for public worship, but wherever we may be! The great house of God is everywhere and His children can always be at home with Him. That is the ideal of a Christian's life, to be always in God's house—

***"No more a stranger or a guest,
But like a child at home."***

David desired not only that he might dwell in God's house, but that he might spend his time in adoring contemplation of the beauty of his God: "to behold the beauty of the Lord." Did you ever think of the wonderful beauties that there are in the character of the Most High? If you want to see them, behold Him who is altogether lovely, in whom the Father is to be most clearly seen, though veiled in human flesh! This should also be *our* lifelong work, to study, to understand, and to enjoy the beauty of the Lord, "and to inquire in His temple," not only to see Him, but to speak with Him and to hear Him speak. A Christian is one who makes inquiries of his God—he is an inquirer when he begins, and he should be an inquirer till he ends. The apostle Peter tells us that the angels belong to the honorable company of inquirers concerning "things that accompany salvation." "Which things the angels desire to look into." Christian men should go to God with their inquiries and when they come to public worship, this should be one great end of it, "to inquire in His temple."

5. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion.

"For"—and this is a reason for dismissing all our fear: "in the time of trouble He shall hide me." "I am so little that I may easily be hidden away by One so great as God is. 'He shall hide me in His pavilion,' in His own royal tent, and beneath the majesty of His sovereignty my soul shall find perfect security."

5. In the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me.

"In that most holy place where none can come and live but those whom God brings there! In the sacred spot where the security must be absolute! In the tabernacle of sacrifice sprinkled with the blood of atonement, shall He hide me." Oh, what a hiding place is this for one who is in trouble!

5. He shall set me up upon a rock.

What perfect security the child of God has, first, in the pavilion of sovereignty, next, in the secrecy of sacrifice, and thirdly, on the rock of immutability! "He shall set me up upon a rock."

6. And now shall my head be lifted up above my enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

If an ungodly man's head were lifted up above His enemies, he would begin to denounce them and to curse them. But when a believer's head is thus lifted up, he begins to praise his God. Then are his songs louder and sweeter than they ever were before! "I will sing, yes, I will sing praises unto the LORD."

7. Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

I thought you were going to sing, David, but you are at prayer, I see. This is how we live spiritually—we breathe in the air by prayer, and we breathe it out by praise! This is the holy respiration of a Christian's life! Prayer and praise must be mingled in a divinely wise proportion, and then they make a sweet incense, acceptable to God. I hope we can say that we have never finished praying but that we feel we must begin singing, and that we have never finished singing but that we must begin praying! What a blessed interchange this makes for the whole of life! "I will sing, yes, I will sing praises unto the Lord. Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy, also, upon me, and answer me."

8. When You said, Seek you My face; my heart said unto You, Your face, LORD, will I seek.

The child of God knows His Father's voice and responds to it. God's Word is like a seal, and we should be like the wax, ready to take the impress of it. "Seek you My face." "Your face, Lord, will I seek." It is the same expression reversed, just as it is when the seal makes an impression.

9. Hide not Your face far from me.

I do not know why the translators put in that word, "far." It is printed in italics, but it should not be there at all! "Hide not Your face from me at all, my Lord. I do not ask You not to hide it far from me, but I pray You not to hide it at all! Make no break in my sunlight. Let me always see You; this is all I ask. Hide not Your face from me."

9. Put not Your servant away in anger.

"Put not Your servant away." God will not put away His children, but He does, sometimes, put His servants away. I know that this is often a prayer of mine. I wonder whether it is yours also—"Dismiss me not from Your service, Lord." We may remain His children, and yet we may scarcely be fit to be employed, any longer, in His service. Let this be your prayer as well as David's, "Put not Your servant away in anger."

9. You have been my help.

"Yes, that You have, O Lord! You have been my help."

9, 10. Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

There is a poor child, and his father and mother have both gone away and left him. But the Divine Father comes along, picks the child up and clasps him to His bosom: "Then the Lord will take me up." It is a wonderful thing to be taken up by God! A man prospers in business and people say, "Oh, yes, he may get on very well, for such-and-such a great man has taken him up!" But how much better shall you and I prosper who can say, "The Lord will take me up"? If He has taken us up, what a wonderful Patron we have! There is no other like the Lord!

11. Teach me Your way, O LORD.

"I am only a child. Teach me, Lord. I am fatherless and motherless. Take me into Your orphanage and teach me Your way, O Lord!"

11. And lead me in a plain path, because of my enemies.

"Make my way to be very straightforward! May my life be such that I never have to apologize for it! May there be no places in it about which unpleasant questions can be asked! Lead me in a plain path because of my enemies. If they can find fault with me, they will do so and if they cannot rightly find fault with me, they will make up some accusation against me. Therefore, O Lord, 'lead me in a plain path because of my enemies.'"

12, 13. Deliver me not over unto the will of my enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Men say that "seeing is believing," but that is not true—*believing* is seeing! So David says, "I had fainted unless I had believed to see." It is by *believing* that we see "the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

14. Wait on the LORD.

I think I hear David say this short sentence to each one in this great assembly tonight, "Wait on the Lord."

14. Be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say.

David says it from his own experience, and thus, as it were, puts his name and seal at the end of the Psalm—"Wait, I say"—

14. On the LORD. Everyone who has ever proven the power of prayer may use the same words as David did! The preacher certainly does and with the psalmist, he exclaims, "Wait, I say, on the Lord."

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